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For 1892.

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tion; even then, in 1839, I am persuaded

that the Indian opium imported, though

"undoubtedly the opium most in request,"

was but a small proportion of the drug

"consumed in China." It further says

that from inquiries he prosecuted with some

intention in the years 1846-49, less than

ten years, that is to say, from the date of our

first rupture with China, he found that the

poppy was cultivated in at least ten of the

eighteen provinces of China. There are

other extremely interesting statements in

this report, the effect of which in our

opinion is to completely corroborate the

charge of having introduced the

vice of opium smoking—into the

China. We do not ourselves look

upon it as a vice *per se*; we regard it

simply as a luxury, which, like all luxu-

ries, may become vicious when indulged

in excess. The responsibility on this

score rests solely with the consumer, and as

Sir THOMAS WADE says in a dispatch to the

PRINCE OF KUNG, so long as the opium pro-

duced in China is sufficient to supply the

needs of the Chinese, the reduction of the

quantity of opium imported, or even the

total exclusion of foreign opium, will not

remunerate the opium smoker. This is self-

evident, and we fail to see that any

moral culpability attaches to the culti-

vation, manufacture, or dealer in an

article of luxury, simply because the luxury

is in individual cases indulged in to excess.

It is not difficult, for instance, to conceive of

a tobacco planter honestly holding the belief

that the use of tobacco was deleterious and

himself eschewing it as such, and yet per-

serving a clear conscience while endeavouring

to make the most he can out of his business.

Or, to put even a stronger case, where

it is not a luxury that is concerned, a

manufacturer of arms and ammunition

might very reasonably on abstract grounds

hold the opinion held by many sensible men

that international disputes could be more

satisfactorily settled by means of arbitration

than by war. The question of conscience

does not arise in such a case. So Sir THOMAS

WADE says, "The evil in opium smok-

ing in China I do not contest," but

"When I proposed at Chefoo to recom-

mend a change in the method of tax-

ing it, I said, I confess, no thought

of assisting the Chinese Government

to extinguish the trade in Indian opium."

"I was dealing only with the rights of China

in respect of the revenue derivable from

opium, that question being part of the

"larger revenue question which I was seek-

ing to regulate in a manner practical

and equitable." In view of the facts of

the case it is useless to introduce the moral

question in regard to our Indian opium trade.

Sir THOMAS WADE says that even in 1847

the cultivation and preparation of the drug

were not a new grown business in Kwangsi.

The rice crop, he was assured, in some

parts of the province was sacrificed to

the poppy. In the South of Fuhien a

white poppy was grown the opium manu-

factured from which was cheap but

exceedingly deleterious. In the far North-

west, at Lan-chow-fu, an opium was manu-

factured which was credited with the nearest

approach to excellence to our own. The

provinces of Szechuen, Hupei, and Hunan pro-

duced their own opium; and when, in 1838,

Sir THOMAS accompanied Lord Elgin to

Hankow he remarked that although the na-

tive drug from these and the provinces of

Kwangtung and Kwangsi was advertised

outside the smoking dens as openly as our

public-house to advertise the liquor we drink,

there was not to be seen in any street that he

traversed a single notice that foreign opium

was for sale. Sir THOMAS, speaking on the

authority of the reports of the members of

the Consular service who were sent to see

whether the proclamation on the Yunnan

outrage had been posted, says that while

it has been supposed Yunnan drew opium

from British Burma, it appears on the con-

trary, that Burmah proper, at all events, is

supplied from Yunnan. Having stated this

and other facts Sir THOMAS WADE says it is

as likely that, with improved tillage and pre-

paration, the native product will one day

compete with ours, as that certain of our

Indian teas, under like conditions, will

exclude certain teas of China from the

market, but that he is confident the total

withdrawal of the Indian Government from

the trade at this moment, while it would

involve the sacrifice of a considerable re-

venue, would not advance the object which

the advocates of that measure have at heart,

the emancipation of the Chinese from a habit

which—we are using Sir THOMAS WADE'S

words, not our own—they too often fatally

abuse. "Were our Indian quota to be with-

held to-morrow," he says, "the Chinese

"would still persist in smoking opium, and

"their own poppy, though inferior in quality

"would be none the less equal to the demand."

If this conclusion be correct, and the facts and

the arguments deduced from them show

that it is, the Anti-Opium Society is at

once out of court. The object of the

Society is to protect the Chinese from what

the Society considers a vice. If the Society

succeeded in putting an end to the Indian

opium trade the effect would be that the

consumer of Indian opium would be driven to

the use of a cheaper and inferior article, and

in all probability he would consume a larger

quantity. One effect of the connection of the

Indian Government with the opium trade, fur-

thermore, is to largely increase the price. If

their connection with it were severed to-

morrow they would have no right to prohibit

the cultivation of the poppy by the natives

of India, and the result would probably be a

large increase in the cultivation and exporta-

tion, just as the abolition of the Govern-

ment monopoly in tobacco in the Philippines

is giving a tremendous impetus to the

cultivation of and trade in tobacco in those

islands. Even if China prohibited the im-

portation of the drug, which there is no like-

lihood of her doing, there would still be a

large demand for it by Chinese smugglers,

who in many cases, would probably have no

difficulty in coming to a mutually profitable

arrangement with the provincial authorities.

The Chinese Government is too astute not

to see the advantage of its present system,

under which there is a large revenue and

comparatively little smuggling, over one

which would inevitably encourage the growth

of a large contraband trade from which she

would derive no revenue.

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